

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GEORGE 01888 01 OF 02 152019Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 EB-08 OPIC-03
 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 /085 W
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O R 151815Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0000
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 1888

BRIDGETOWN PLEASE PASS SHELTON AND EINAUDI

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: GY, PINT
SUBJECT: THE OPENING OF THE PNC'S BIENNIAL CONGRESS

REF: GEORGETOWN 1856

BEGIN SUMMARY: DECISIONS TAKEN DURING THE PEOPLES NATIONAL CONGRESS (PNC) SECOND BIENNIAL CONGRESS WHICH RUNS FROM AUGUST 12-20 WILL SET THE PNC'S STRATEGY FOR THE UPCOMING ELECTION AND PROBABLY THE DIRECTION GUYANA WILL TAKE DURING THE NEXT TWO YEARS. THE CONGRESS OPENED AUGUST 12 WITH SPEECHES BY PARTY CHAIRMAN CAMMIE RAMSAROOP AND THE PNC'S GENERAL SECRETARY PTOLEMY REID WHO DELIVERED A REPORT OF THE PAST TWO YEARS' PROBLEMS AND PROGRESS. ON AUGUST 13 PRIME MINISTER FORBES BURNHAM DELIVERED A TWO-HOUR SPEECH. REPORTS WE HAVE RECEIVED INDICATE THAT BURNHAM, REID AND RAMSAROOP, WHILE TALKING OF SOCIALISM, CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE SET A MODERATE TONE TO GUIDE THE CONGRESS' DELIBERATIONS. REPORTEDLY BURNHAM SPOKE FAVORABLY OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION. THAT THE STRONG POSITIVE INFLUENCE OF ANDREW YOUNG AND HIS GROUP IS STILL REVERBERATING THROUGHOUT GUYANA IS EXTREMELY FORTUITOUS AND, WE BELIEVE, WILL HAVE A MODERATING INFLUENCE ON THE CONGRESS. FROM INITIAL INDICATIONS, IT APPEARS THAT BURNHAM INTENDS

TO SHIFT GUYANA'S COURSE SLIGHTLY RIGHTWARD WITHOUT ADMITTING PREVIOUS ERROR OR MAKING ANY DRAMATIC SIGNALS OF A CHANGE. END SUMMARY.

1. POLICIES ADOPTED BY THE PNC'S SECOND BIENNIAL CONGRESS, AUGUST 12-20, WILL GUIDE THE PNC DURING THE NEXT TWO YEARS AND, IF THE PNC REMAINS IN POWER, GIVE POLITICAL DIRECTION TO THE GOVERNMENT. THE THEME OF THE CONGRESS IS "ECONOMIC LIBERATION THROUGH SOCIALISM." THIS CABLE WILL DESCRIBE THE POLITICAL CONTEXT IN WHICH THE CONGRESS IS BEING HELD. DESPITE THE VERY POSITIVE SIGNALS WE HAVE SEEN RECENTLY IN RELATION TO US-GOG RELATIONS, NEGATIVE INFLUENCES ARE ALSO AT WORK. THE LATTER INCLUDES THE RADICAL MOMENTUM BUILD UP DURING RECENT YEARS WHICH WAS DESCRIBED IN 1975 (GEORGETOWN A-98 SEPTEMBER 12, 1975) AS BURNHAM'S "DRIVE TO TRANSFORM GUYANA INTO AN INDEPENDENT COMMUNIST STATE." WHILE THIS WAS IN OUR VIEW AN EX-AGGERATED INTERPRETATION, THE THRUST GIVEN GUYANA IN 1975 WAS A RADICAL ONE AND REVERSING IT NOW IS NOT A SIMPLE MATTER.

2. BURNHAM HAS BEEN UNDER CONFLICTING PRESSURES FROM THE DIFFERENT IDEOLOGICAL WINGS OF THE PNC. THE MODERATE WING OF THE PARTY--PRIMARILY COMPOSED OF CABINET MINISTERS, BUREAUCRATS, MANAGERS OF STATE
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CORPORATIONS, PROFESSIONALS AND SOME BUSINESSMEN--HAS BEEN ARGUING FOR MODERATION AND FOR A STRONG PUBLIC SIGNAL THAT FOREIGN PRIVATE CAPITAL IS WELCOME IN GUYANA. THIS WING OF THE PNC IS AWARE OF ECONOMIC REALITIES AND WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE PRIME MINISTER TAKE GUYANA ON A MODERATE RIGHTWARD COURSE. MEMBERS OF THE PNC'S MODERATE WING HAVE ENTHUSIASTICALLY WELCOMED THE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS WITH THE US, AND IN THE EMBASSY'S JUDGEMENT SO HAS MUCH OF GUYANA'S POPULATION.

3. THE RADICALS OF THE PNC'S LEFT WING, HOWEVER, ARE ACTIVE AND ADAMANT. DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS THEY HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED AND SUPPORTED BY BURNHAM AND THEY DREW POLITICAL SUSTENANCE FROM THE CONFRONTATION WITH THE US. THEY ALSO ARE ENCOURAGED IN THEIR EFFORTS BY THE SOVIET AND CUBAN EMBASSIES HERE. THEY WOULD HAVE BURNHAM BREAK OUT OF GUYANA'S PRESENT ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CRISIS BY CONVERTING GUYANA INTO A "REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST STATE." WHILE NOT NUMEROUS, THIS FACTION INCLUDES LEADERS OF THE YOUTH MOVEMENT, SOME OF THE PNC'S REGIONAL SECRETARIES AND A NUMBER OF OFFICIALS IN THE MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

WE HAVE READ POSITION PAPERS PREPARED DURING JULY BY
PNC REGIONAL SUBCOMMITTEES DOMINATED BY RADICALS. IF
ADOPTED BY THE CONGRESS, THE POSITIONS OUTLINED IN THESE
PAPERS WOULD FURTHER RADICALIZE THE PARTY.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 1888

BRIDGETOWN PLEASE PASS SHELTON AND EINAUDI

4. BURNHAM'S PERSONALITY AND PHYSICAL STATE ARE ALSO
IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS. PERSONS CLOSE TO BURNHAM
SAY THAT HE IS DETERMINED TO GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS
GUYANA'S FOREMOST IDEOLOGICAL THINKER AND REVOLUTIONARY.
HE IS BOTHERED BY THE FACT THAT HE SPLIT GUYANA'S
NATIONALIST MOVEMENT ALONG RACIAL LINES WHEN HE CREATED
THE PNC. HE IS JEALOUS OF CHEDDI JAGAN'S RECOGNITION
INTERNATIONALLY AS A REVOLUTIONARY AND SOCIALIST
THEORETICIAN. FONMIN WILLS HAS SAID THAT BURNHAM'S HEART
ATTACK AND HEALTH PROBLEMS HAVE MADE THE PM REALIZE
THAT HE MAY NOT HAVE MUCH TIME LEFT TO ACHIEVE HIS
AMBITIONS AND, THEREFORE, HE IS IMPATIENT. ACCORDING
TO WILLS, BURNHAM MIGHT OPT FOR QUICK AND SURE RECOGNITION
AS A BOLD REVOLUTIONARY, PARTICULARLY IF HE CAN SEE NO
WAY OF REALIZING HIS AMBITIOUS SCHEMES FOR DEVELOPING
GUYANA ECONOMICALLY.

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5. CONFLICTING WITH BURNHAM'S DESIRE FOR A HISTORICAL IMAGE AS A REVOLUTIONARY LEADER, IS HIS PRACTICAL NEED TO DEVELOP GUYANA AND PARTICULARLY OBTAIN FINANCING FOR THE UPPER MAZARUNI HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT. BURNHAM NOW APPEARS AWARE THAT COMMUNIST COUNTRIES WILL NOT PROVIDE LARGE SCALE FINANCING FOR THIS OR OTHER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, AND THAT THE BEST POTENTIAL SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE APPEAR TO BE WESTERN GOVERNMENTS, FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND POSSIBLY PRIVATE CAPITAL. TO EXPLOIT THESE SOURCES HE WILL HAVE TO TEMPER GUYANA'S "SOCIALIST THRUST," AND CURB RADICAL RHETORIC.

6. THUS BURNHAM IS CAUGHT IN A WEB OF CONFLICTING FORCES NOT ONLY BETWEEN THE TWO WINGS OF HIS PARTY BUT WITHIN HIMSELF. IN RECENT WEEKS HE HAS GIVEN CONSERVATIVE FOLLOWERS THE IMPRESSION THAT HE INTENDS TO SHIFT THE PARTY TO A MODERATE COURSE. HOWEVER, BURNHAM'S RELUCTANCE TO ADMIT ERROR, HIS EGO AND THE CONSIDERABLE RADICAL PRESSURES AROUND HIM AND THE PRESSURE GENERATED BY THE PRESENCE OF OBSERVER DELEGATIONS TO THE CONGRESS FROM SOCIALIST AND COMMUNIST PARTIES ELSEWHERE, WILL TEND TO WORK AGAINST MODERATION. THE INITIATIVE OF THE OPPOSITION ON THE EVE OF THE CONGRESS IN CALLING FOR A NATIONAL FRONT OF PROGRESSIVE FORCES, INCLUDING EXPLICITLY THE LEFT WING OF THE PNC, UNDOUBTEDLY HAS GENERATED ADDITIONAL PRESSURES ON BURNHAM (SEE REFTEL).

7. INFORMATION WE HAVE OBTAINED OVER THE WEEKEND INDICATES THAT BURNHAM SET A MODERATE TONE DURING HIS SPEECH ON AUGUST 13, CALLING FOR GREATER PRODUCTIVITY AND COMPLIMENTING EXPLICITLY THE FOREIGN POLICIES ADOPTED BY PRESIDENT CARTER. PARTY CHAIRMAN RAMSAROOP, IN ADDRESS TO OPEN THE CONGRESS ON AUGUST 12 STRUCK A MODERATE TONE, AND SIMILARLY PNC'S GENERAL SECRETARY

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AND GOG DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PTOLEMY REID'S REPORT THE PAST TWO YEARS DID NOT PLAY UP DIFFERENCES WITH THE US (SEPARATE REPORTS FOLLOW ON THESE SPEECHES).

8. TO MAKE THE CONGRESS MORE MANAGEABLE BURNHAM AS STRUCTURED IT INTO FOUR "COMMISSIONS" WHICH WILL DEAL WITH THE MAJOR ISSUES INCLUDING A NEW PARTY CONSTITUTION. IN CONTRAST, THE PREVIOUS CONGRESS HAD 17 COMMITTEES. THE CONGRESS HAS OBSERVERS FROM CUBA, THE USSR, GDR, NORTH KOREA, BARBADOS, YUGOSLAVIA, MOZAMBIQUE, ANGOLA,

TANZANIA, ZIMBABWE AND ZAMBIA.

9. COMMENT: THE MAJOR ISSUE AT THE CONGRESS, FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF US INTERESTS, IS HOW IT WILL RESOLVE THE ISSUE OF WHETHER TO TURN GUYANA TOWARD MODERATION AND A MIXED ECONOMY OR TO DRIVE TOWARD A MORE RIGID SOCIALISM. IT APPEARS THAT BURNHAM HAS SIGNALLED THAT HE WANTS THE FORMER. THE ENCOURAGEMENT GIVEN GOVERNMENT LEADERS, INCLUDING BURNHAM, BY THE DECISION OF THE US TO EXPAND ITS AID PROGRAMS HAS BEEN AMPLIFIED BY THE POWERFUL INFLUENCE ANDREW YOUNG'S FORTUITOUS VISIT ON THE EVE OF THE CONGRESS. THE IMPACT OF THE LATTER IS STILL REVERBERATING AND BEING DIGESTED. IN CONTRAST TO A YEAR AGO, MODERATES IN THE PARTY AND THE GOVERNMENT CAN NOW ARGUE THAT CURRENT US POLICIES INDICATE THAT GUYANA'S FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAN BEST OR PERHAPS ONLY BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

10. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT BURNHAM WILL SUCCEED IN SHIFTING THE PNC TO A MORE MODERATE COURSE. IN DOING SO HE WILL BE CAREFUL NOT TO ADMIT PUBLICLY TO PREVIOUS ERROR OR TO INDICATE THAT HIS VIEWS ON SOCIALISM HAVE CHANGED IN ANY WAY. ALTHOUGH MANY GUYANESE, INCLUDING MEMBERS AND SOME LEADERS OF THE PNC, WOULD REJOICE WERE BURNHAM TO RECANT ON SOCIALISM, HIS EGO AND BASIC CONFIDENTIAL

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ORIENTATION WOULD NOT PERMIT THAT . WHAT IS POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE WAY SOCIALISM IS DEFINED AND MADE TO WORK CAN BE CHANGED GRADUALLY AND IT APPEARS THAT THIS CONGRESS MAY PUT ITS STAMP OF APPROVAL ON THAT PROCESS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Retention: 0
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Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE OPENING OF THE PNC'S BIENNIAL CONGRESS
TAGS: PINT, GY, PNC, PEOPLES NATIONAL CONGRESS
To: STATE BRIDGETOWN
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/621df25a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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